

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5416

As Passed Senate, February 18, 2002

Title: An act relating to drug-affected infants.

Brief Description: Requiring screening of pregnant and lactating women for nonprescription use of controlled substances.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Patterson, Stevens, Long, Hargrove, Rossi, Winsley, McAuliffe and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/19/01, 1/31/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/6/01, 46-0; 2/18/02, 42-7.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5416 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Carlson, Franklin, Hewitt, Kastama, Long and Stevens.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Medical research links prenatal drug exposure to developmental problems in children. Drug-affected infants are often born prematurely, have low birth weights and other significant medical problems. As the drug-affected infant matures, he or she may experience learning disabilities, hyperactivity, articulation and socialization problems, including anti-social behavior. The Legislature has attempted to address the issue of preventing infant drug exposure over the course of several previous sessions.

Summary of Bill: Primary health care providers are required to screen pregnant or lactating women for nonprescription use of controlled substances, according to criteria developed by the Department of Health. Pregnant women who seek health care at the time of delivery who indicate they have had little or no prenatal health care are also screened using the same criteria. The infant is tested if screening findings suggest the need.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2001.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Services are needed for families experiencing the birth or multiple births of a drug-affected infant. Services are quite costly. These babies need protection.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Barbara Drennen, PICC (pro); Susie Tracy, WA St Medical Assn.